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1914-1943

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LITTLE REVIEWS

1914-1943

by

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CHAPTER I

THE little review or small magazine is an integral part of literature. It reflects, far more accurately than the more popular publications, the spirit of a literary period. Its writers write, not to order—not to please an audience—but to satisfy themselves and, perhaps, contribute something of value to art and culture. Thus, the little review, though often excessively critical, is at least alive and honest. Nor is its value to literature merely the current one of stimulation and education: it lives on long after death (most little reviews are privately sponsored, have short and difficult lives) as a spontaneous portrayal—it may be of a particular trend of writing, of the activity of a writer or a group of writers, or even of a complete literary phase. Looking now through the little reviews published in this country during the past twenty-five years or so, for instance, one can form an impression of literary development which has a colour and charm inevitably missing from the leisured recordings of an historian.

Perhaps the best of the little reviews that appeared in this country during the Great War was a publication which was actually produced in America (although its sphere of influence belonged as much to this country and France). This was the much-travelled, much-criticized *Little Review,* which was started in March, 1914, and lived an eventful life until its gradual decease sometime in the late twenties. The *Little Review* belonged to Margaret Anderson, a lady of dubious literary prowess but adequate financial resources. ("You have

not enough respect for art to protect it from your own ignorance" wrote one of her associates and co-editors, Jane Heap.) Margaret Anderson was constantly travelling and the magazine was published sometimes from New York, sometimes from Chicago, sometimes from California. During its early years the *Little Review* consisted mainly of poetry and reviews by American writers—with such occasional English features as a London letter from Edward Shanks or a poem from Rupert Brooke. In 1917, however, Ezra Pound took over the foreign editorship, writing: "I wish a place where the current prose writings of James Joyce, Wyndham Lewis, T. S. Eliot and myself might appear regularly, promptly and together, rather than irregularly, sporadically and after useless delays." It was during Pound's editorship, for the next two and a half years, that the magazine attained its highest reputation. A Continental influence quickly began to predominate: in the February, 1918, issue Pound devoted 58 out of the 68 pages to a study of French poets, commenting "The time when the intellectual affairs of America could be conducted on a monlingual basis is over. It has been irksome for too long. We offer no apology for printing most of this number in French. The intellectual life of London is dependent on people who understand this language about as well as their own. America's part in contemporary culture is based chiefly on two men familiar with Paris: Whistler and Henry James." It was during Pound's editorship that the *Little Review* began publishing, in instalment form, James Joyce's "Ulysses." The first instalment appeared in the March, 1918, issue, which was altogether an excellent number, including, in addition, "Imaginary Letters" by Wyndham Lewis, "Law, Order and the Republic" by Ezra Pound, "Women and Men" by Ford Madox Hueffer, and a series of drawings by modern American artists.

Unfortunately the authorities impounded several *Little Review* issues of this period, because of the "Ulysses" contributions. It is difficult for me to recapture by mere description the atmosphere of the *Little Review,* but atmosphere it had. Even during the war years, when it was often printed on cheap paper with a sickly brown cover, the magazine looked "meaty." Its plain cover—"The Little Review—A Magazine of the Arts Making No Compromise with the Public Taste"—summed up the contents fairly well. Pound's influence was invaluable; he brought into the magazine the necessary note of mature confidence, of authoritative criticism. When the magazine began giving more attention to Continental art he was not afraid—nor incapable—of approaching the subject critically. "Foreign criticism and opinion is a corrective, at times" he urged in one issue. "Foreign criticism, if honest, can never be quite the same as home criticism; it may be better or worse; or it may have the same value as the criticism of a different decade or century. At least it has some chance of escaping whims and stampedes of opinions." Pound did indeed make the *Little Review* an outlet for the works of Lewis, Joyce, Eliot, himself and many other literary giants of the day; consequently the magazine was eagerly read in this country, particularly by the younger writers, and had a very considerable influence in creating the new, more progressive literary outlook that developed out of the 1914-18 war. It was a misfortune for British, as well as for American literature when, after Pound had severed his connection, the magazine—possibly through a certain shallowness of mind on the part of Margaret Anderson, who was easily swayed by "surface" art fashions—began to decline into obscurity, and ultimately ceased publication.

The *Little Review* helped to focus the literary spotlight on

the Pound-Wyndham Lewis-Eliot group. Wyndham Lewis himself also did a great deal of work in this direction. None of Lewis's literary activities have been more entertaining or provocative than his work in connection with little reviews. It was just before the outbreak of the Great War when he launched what is probably his most famous little review, under the expressive one-syllable title, *Blast*. Only two editions were published, limited to a small number of copies, but these caused a first-rate literary sensation. The layout was lavish, headings being splashed about in newspaper fashion and extremely large typefaces being used even for the material of stories and articles. All the virulence and force of the Wyndham Lewis personality went into *Blast*, whose main message was that art was in danger of drowning in its own mire of lethargy and orthodoxy, and that something must be done, especially in the face of the added danger of wartime reactionaryism. Among the more outstanding contents of *Blast* were a group of T. S. Eliot's early poems (first publication), reviews by Ford Madox Hueffer, drawings and articles by Lewis, and a fine short story, by Rebecca West, about a man trying to drown his wife. Although elaborately laid out in bold letters and short sentences (several pages consisted only of banner headlines) *Blast* was to some extent obscure—irritatingly obscure in view of the obvious importance of its message. Although primarily concerned with art, *Blast* contained very few illustrations. Both No. 1 and No. 2 issues were printed on very thick paper and bound between stiff covers. For all its faults, however, *Blast* probably caused more comment, in proportion to its minute circulation, than any other little review of its decade. In this, though, it was rivalled by a later review which Lewis launched, called the *Enemy*. This publication, even more luxurious in appearance, also only

had two issues, although a wider circulation was obtained. Zwemmer's collaborated in the publication of the second number. Almost all the contents of *Enemy* seemed to be contributed by Lewis himself, but more space was given to illustrations than in *Blast*. None of the little reviews which Lewis has launched have lasted more than a few issues. This is probably not so much an adverse comment on the reviews as a reflection of the eternal restlessness of their sponsor.

Another outstanding English writer and individualist launched his own little review during the Great War: David Herbert Lawrence. He outlined his idea in a letter to Lady Ottaline Morrell, published in the *Letters:* "Murry (John Middleton) and I are going to start a little paper which is to contain his ideas of immediate personal freedom, what it means for me to feel free in my own soul, when I am alone: and I am to write my ideas of the other, the impersonal freedom, the freedom of me in relation to the world, me and all the world, a free thing. Then Mrs. Murry (Katherine Mansfield) is to write a satirical sketch, perhaps each number. We begin in October (1915). Then for three months I shall work hard and not mind if people are sterile or stones. Then at the end of the three months we shall reconsider what is done and what is to be done." More practical details were given in a letter to Lady Cynthia Asquith: "We are thinking of issuing a little paper fortnightly to private subscribers—2s. 6d. for three months (6 copies) including postage. Perhaps Bertie Russell and Gilbert Cannan will come in. We have a little Jew in the East End who is engaged on the *Jewish Encyclopædia*. He will print us 250 copies of 28 pages of 36 lines, for £5; or 36 pages for £6. It will be about the same size as the *Mercure de France,* but 28 or 36 pages thick. If it is 28 pages thick, that costs £30 for three months. 250 half-

crowns is just £31 5s. So we must get 250 subscribers. You must subscribe and find one or two people who care about the real living truth of things; for God's sake not people who only trifle and don't care." Lawrence called the new magazine *Signature,* and I quote the arrangement details at length because they give an interesting proof of how whole-heartedly Lawrence lent himself to the venture. There was no question of making money—on the contrary, more chance of losing it. ("We are desperately poor, but we must do something, so we are taking the responsibility of this little journal on ourselves.") Lawrence worked exhaustingly, writing long personal letters to friends and almost begging for subscriptions. His enthusiasm was unspoilt by memories of any previous failures ("This is my first try at direct approach to the public: art, after all, is indirect and ultimate. . . . I want this to be more immediate.") and also probably stimulated by the urgent necessity, as he saw it, of raising a small voice against the sinister progress of a war-hypnotized world. Moreover, Lawrence had big ambitions for *Signature,* which he evidently conceived as a stepping stone to bigger developments. Murry and he at the same time took two rooms in Fisher Street, where they held club meetings, discussions, etc. Looking forward with some eagerness, Lawrence wrote: "Perhaps by Christmas we shall have some little footing and I can be reconciled to all my friends and we can unite in a bigger effort, a bigger paper and Russell can give his lectures, and we can have good club meetings. Perhaps—God knows. And perhaps everything will fizzle out. Then. . . . I shall have another try when the social weather is more promising." Lawrence obtained subscriptions from friends in Britain and America, but progress was slow, and when the first issue came out he had not anything like the required £30. *Signature*

came out, however, for its six issues, with some lively material by the Lawrence-Murry-Mansfield trio. Nevertheless, what Lawrence half expected happened, and it "fizzled out." As is the case with most ultra-progressive little reviews it had to fight hard for readers, while at the same time being open to the attacks of the orthodox. If a little review is to come through such an initial storm it must have some financial backing, and that was the one thing Lawrence lacked. So *Signature* died. Who knows how considerable a difference might have been made, not only in Lawrence's life but in much of our early post-war literary development, if Lawrence's daydreams of "a bigger effort, a bigger paper" had come to life? As it was, that was Lawrence's only attempt at sponsoring a little review, although shortly before his death he was planning, with Charlie Lahr, a London bookseller, to start "a little fortnightly rag called the *Squib* or something like that —just to rag them all, to get at them and lampoon them, to make fun of them, to jeer at them and altogether have a good time." Rhys Davies was to edit the magazine; Lawrence was going to write under the name Davy Dolittle—all contributions were to be anonymous. Of course, it is probably true that an artist of Lawrence's emotional calibre should never have wasted his energies on the hundred and one petty details involved in starting a magazine. Nevertheless, Lawrence got a great deal of his philosophy off his mind and into *Signature*, and copies of that little review are very valuable to-day.

Little Review, *Blast* and *Signature* were three of the more unusual little reviews of the war period. Then there was a small monthly, the *Egoist*, whose self-described character I cannot refrain from quoting: "This Journal is not a chatty literary review: its mission is not to divert and amuse: it is not written for tired and depressed people. Its aim is rather

to secure a fit audience and to render available to that audience contemporary literary work bearing the stamp of originality and permanence: to present in the making those contemporary literary efforts which will ultimately constitute 20th century literature. The philosophical articles which the *Egoist* publishes by presenting the sub-matter of metaphysics in a form which admits of logical treatment, are promising a new era for philosophy. The power of its fictional work is investing that commonest but laxest of literary forms—the novel (as written in English) with a new destiny and a new meaning. In poetry, its pages are open to experiments which are transforming the whole conception of poetic form, while among its writers appear leaders in pioneering methods radically affecting the allied arts." A progressive note was also struck by *To-day*, the monthly edited by that man-of-many-talents, Holbrook Jackson. Jackson—at the same time an acknownowledged expert on literature, a specialist in the crafts of book production and printing, and a leading figure in the field of trade and technical magazines—seemed to bring something of all these talents into the production of *To-day* which, viewed from 25 years later, had an extremely modern appearance, published in pocket-size form and in good clear typography. For a little review, too, it was very well supported by advertisers, sometimes carrying more than 20 pages. An interesting side-activity of *To-day* was the organization of a *To-day* Literary Circle, which held meetings at the Emerson Club, with Jackson, George Sampson and Cecil Roberts among the lecturers.

To-day was essentially literary in tone, and it had much in common with the strong group of established reviews, such as the *London Mercury, Athenæum, Nation, English Review, Cornhill, British Review, Spectator,* etc. There is no space

here to review these more orthodox reviews, but it must be remembered that, particularly during the last war, they formed a very solid front in the fight to maintain a high standard of literature. There was, on the other hand, little unity among the more unorthodox little reviews that appeared; they were essentially individualistic, voices in the wilderness; and in that they would appear to have faithfully reflected a feeling of disquiet and uncertainty which permeated English literature during the war.

CHAPTER II

The early post-war years were marked by the issue of a spate of new little reviews, as well as a revival of interest in the existing ones. Many of the reviews covered wider fields than pure literature. The reaction to the war was at its strongest; men turned away from the sordidness of material things to philosophy, in the hope of finding new hope. This feeling was typically expressed in John Middleton Murry's new monthly *Adelphi,* which is still in publication. Murry wanted to be constructive, but not revolutionarily so, hence earning the gibe from Lawrence—"Why in the name of hell don't you rouse up a bit and put a bit of gunpowder in your stuff and fire a shot or two?" But Murry was successful in building up the *Adelphi* into one of the most authoritative of the post-war reviews. Murry himself already had a big reputation as a literary critic and reviewer. He also seemed to gather around him a list of literary names which could stand up against those of any other review of the day. Aldous Huxley,

George Santayana, Leon Shestov, Robert Hillyer, Waldo Frank, Stuart Gilbert, Stella Benson and Dorothy Richardson were among the early contributors. The fortunes of *Adelphi* have been very strongly bound up with those of its founder and editor, whose increasingly strong Socialist and pacifist convictions have become imprinted more and more on the magazine. Literary articles have been gradually superseded by political and philosophical articles, and by 1937 we find *Adelphi,* much depleted in size, with the sub-head "Religion is Politics: and Politics is Brotherhood." One of the outstanding features of *Adelphi* has been the opening commentary by Murry, which he seems to have contributed over some 18 or 19 years. This, together with Eliot's commentary in *Criterion,* must rank as something of a landmark—for consistent depth of thought and quality of writing—in little review history.

Lawrence contributed to some of the early issues of *Adelphi,* but he never quite got over his annoyance at Murry's refusal of his first article, after the two had arranged to work in close collaboration on the magazine. However, Lawrence contributed to many of the other little reviews of the early post-war period, and one of these which created considerable interest was the *Calendar,* edited by Edgell Rickword and Bertram Higgins. The *Calendar,* a quarterly, was also responsible for introducing some of the best work of Roy Campbell, the poet. Campbell and Lawrence were regular contributors, with poems and book reviews. Lawrence's poem "Rainbow" —"One thing that is bow-legged and can't put its feet together is the rainbow"—first appeared in *Calendar;* also Campbell's attractive "Festivals of Flight." That entertaining study by Robert Graves and Laura Riding, "The Anthologist in our Midst," was also published in *Calendar,* which printed a great amount of critical work as well as stories and poems—

and also specialized in translations of Russian and French prose (i.e. Remizov's "The Burning" and Babel's "The Letter").

Among the most interesting of the immediate post-war literary reviews to appear in England were *Voices* and *Art and Letters,* both of which were concerned very greatly (though not entirely) with poetry. *Voices* was launched by the poet and anthologer Thomas Moult, and published from Charing Cross Road's famous "Bomb Shop"—Henderson's Bookshop, No. 66. Unlike so many other reviews, *Voices* apparently professed no dynamic purpose, no aggressive "policy," other than that expressed in the short sentence occupying the whole of the inside cover: "Each voice speaks an individual and independent vision." And they were very important voices, reflective of the new generation of forward-looking writers that were about to come into their own. *Art and Letters,* which flourished in 1919, like *Voices,* had an even more impressive contributors list, with such names as Osbert Sitwell, Siegfried Sassoon, Wilfred Childe, Herbert Read, Ronald Firbank, Wyndham Lewis, Douglas Goldring, Paul and John Nash. A feature of *Art and Letters* was its ambitious editorial coverage—apart from poetry and short stories, it published linocuts, woodcuts, etchings, reproductions of paintings, and even musical scores. The paper was published from 9, Duke Street, Adelphi, then also the headquarters of Frank Rutter's Adelphi Gallery, which helped to introduce many of the new progressive artists, such as Edward Wadsworth and Jacob Kramer.

Just after the war there also appeared a new little review with an unusual aim—to revive "a new Theatre, giving to a people sorely in need Joy, Beauty and Social Service." The first number of this review, named *Theatre-Craft,* announced:

"The state of the English Theatre is one of utter degradation; its condition will not bear comparison with that of the theatre in any other country; the urgent need for reform is proclaimed in even the tied organs of this Art, which has become a mere trade." *Theatre-Craft* propagated, among other remedies, the introduction of the Little Theatre movement in this country. Edited by Hermon Ould (present secretary of the P.E.N. Club), Horace Shipp and Norman Macdermott (though the latter resigned within a short time), the magazine created something of a stir, not only in the theatrical world, but also in the literary world. It covered a wide field of the drama—a typical issue having among its contributions: "The Future of the Theatre" by Gilbert Cannan, "Towards an Earnest Theatre" by Alexander Bakshy, "A Note on Dunsany" by Beatrice Keen Seymour, and notes by Ezra Pound. *Theatre-Craft* was important because it was reflective of the way in which new life was being breathed into many of the arts, not only literature. Another example of this was the *Sackbut,* a magazine launched by Peter Warlock to deal with the progress and development of music in the modern world. At first *Sackbut* was rather laboriously concerned with technicalities, with heavy articles on "The Relation of Folk-Song to the development of the Art Music of Our Time," and so on. The paper then carried long lists of advertisements by music schools, teachers, etc. Towards the end of the 1920's, however, the magazine improved tremendously, and under the editorship of Ursula Greville it widened its scope to include films, the theatre, literature, poetry as well as music. It was then much thicker in size—bereft (sadly from the commercial point of view) of its pages of heavy musical advertisements, but much better for the change.

One other immediate post-war review that deserves men-

tion was not actually published in England, but in Italy and, later, Germany; but it was printed in English, and had a large following in England. This was Harold A. Loeb's *Broom* — "an international magazine of the arts." For its time, *Broom* was almost revolutionary, and reminiscent of the later *Transition*. Like *Transition, Broom* specialized in publishing works of advanced creative art which were spurned by the usual publications. One of their big features was the publication of works by Isadore Ducaste (Comte de Lautreamont), including extracts from the Lay of Maldoror. *Broom* was published monthly, had offices in America, Rome (later Berlin) and in London, where Cecil Palmer was in charge. Edward Storer was associate editor, Lola Ridge American editor. Most of the contributors were American or French. An unusual feature of *Broom* was its size—slightly under the size of a foolscap sheet. This same extra large size was favoured by the *Apple,* an English little review which appeared in the early post-war years, and which was probably the most lavish little review ever to appear in this country. Published by the Colour Publishing Co., with Herbert Furst, the art critic, as editor, *Apple* was printed on art paper, carried dozens of pages of etchings and paintings, and numerous articles, stories and poems by modern English writers of the time. As there was little advertising support it was perhaps not surprising that such a luxuriously produced paper stopped after a few issues.

Two literary magazines that flourished after the war were *The Chapbook* and *New Coterie*. *The Chapbook* was actually one of the first of the post-war reviews, being launched in July, 1919. Like many other little reviews, it was associated with a bookshop—the Poetry Bookshop in Devonshire Street. It was edited by Harold Monro, who contributed poetry regularly,

and it published material by Walter de la Mare, Alec Waugh, John Gould Fletcher, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Lovat Fraser, Robert Bridges and Gordon Craig, among others. Occasionally one came across something by Eliot or Hueffer; Osbert Sitwell was another contributor. *The Chapbook* came out monthly, totalling 32 pages, often with a colour woodcut cover. It represented something of an intellectual middle-class outlook, but was quite progressive, particularly in the field of poetry. *New Coterie* was probably more important since it did, as the name implied, attempt to introduce a new group of writers. During the Great War, Henderson's Bookshop had launched a *Coterie*—with the then young and promising Aldous Huxley among its contributors—but it had not survived six issues. *New Coterie* was in the nature of a revival. It was one of a number of reviews that could fairly be said to have sprung up out of the literary atmosphere surrounding Archer's Bookshop in Red Lion Square. *New Coterie* was published by Archer's, and came out quarterly. The new writers it helped to introduce included H. E. Bates, L. Aaronson, Caryl Brahms, Nancy Cunard, Donald Boyd, Donald Steward and Rhys Davies. T. F. Powys, Aldous Huxley and A. S. J. Tessimond were also among the contributors. ("Already men are brushing up brown leaves around the saddened parks," begins one of Tessimond's wistful poems.) Rhys Davies was a strong man of the *New Coterie* group, and one of the best things the magazine did was to get a wider public for a writer who, like Caradoc Evans, stood out as a representative of a new, realistic voice in Welsh literature. It was *New Coterie* that first published Davies's "Six Stories of Life in a Welsh Mining Village" which attracted so much attention that Archer's later published them in book form under the title "Song of Songs." One other feature of *New Coterie* was its

interest in the art of woodcuts and linocuts: it published a number of very modernistic works by such artists as Jacob Kramer and William Roberts.

Most of the best poetry of these times seemed to appear in the general literary reviews, but poetry had its own magazines. The *Poetry Review* had survived the war, during which period it was published for the Poetry Society by Erskine Macdonald, who did a great deal for poetry, publishing numerous volumes of poetry by such new writers as Sheila Kaye Smith, W. J. Cameron, Bernard Moore, etc. With such contributors as Galsworthy, Thomas Hardy, Ralph Hodgson, Laurence Housman, Frances Cornford, Walter de la Mare, Alice Meynell, Arthur Symons and A. C. Benson, the *Review* was always good value, although then, as to this day, it showed a strong conservatism. A more venturesome poetry review was *Decachord,* "a bi-monthly magazine for poets and students," which flourished in the twenties and is alive to this day. Edited, then, by C. J. Arnell and S. Matthewman, the *Decachord* presented some of the best post-war poems of such important poets as Robert Graves, E. H. W. Meyerstein, Siegfried Sassoon, Sacheverell Sitwell, Humbert Wolfe, Wilfrid Gibson, Wilfred Roland Childe, Alberta Vickridge and Lady Margaret Sackville.

Art, too, was beginning to stimulate its own little reviews. An ambitious "international quarterly of arts and crafts," entitled *Artwork,* was launched under the editorship of Herbert Wauthier. This was better reading than the rather ponderous old-fashioned art magazines, such as the *Burlington.* Its contents were divided between analytical articles and illustrations. James Laver, Jane Quigley, Richard Fletcher and Kineston Parkes used to write regularly. One of the earliest had a bevy of 80 illustrations—by Velasquez, Manet,

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Winterhalter, Picasso, George Grosz, Leon Bakst, Marie Laurencin, Asselin, Bourdelle, Arturo Checchi, Eric Gill, Henry Lamb, Maurice Lambert, William Shackleton, Glyn Philpot, Charles Sims and G. Clausen. *Artwork* did, in fact, build up an international reputation, and by 1930 or so it was one of our most important reviews, although in later years it died away.

CHAPTER III

ANOTHER good art review of the early post-war years, published in this country, was *Experiment,* published by G. F. Noxon, from Trinity College, Cambridge, and edited by J. Bronowski and Hugh Sykes. *Experiment* was particularly interesting because, with its surrealist inclinations, it was an example of several English reviews which at this time were beginning to reflect more and more the growing influence of the new—sometimes revolutionary—art movements emanating from Paris. During the 1920's a large colony of Anglo-American writers had become domiciled in Paris. They were naturally attracted to new movements which tended towards a more virulent and dynamic form of art and literature (and were particularly interested in the revolutionary Dada movement, the forerunner of to-day's surrealism, led by André Breton). It was not surprising that these English and American writers, as they grew in numbers and as they assimilated the many new ideas tossed about Paris literary circles of those days, should seek an outlet in their own language. Thus we had the appearance of a number of little reviews which, although published from Paris, were printed in English.

Many of these reviews naturally had a large sale and influence in this country (and in America). The three most interesting, during the 1920-1930 period, were *This Quarter,* the *Exile* and *Transition*. *This Quarter* was originally edited by Ernest Walsh and Ethel Moorhead, but its most interesting period was when it was edited and published from No. 4 Rue Delambre, Montparnasse, Paris, by Edward W. Titus, a prominent figure in the Anglo-American-Franco literary circles of those days. Edward Titus was the typical man-of-letters, and knew everyone that mattered in Paris art circles. He was very friendly with Richard Aldington, who had helped him considerably in developing *This Quarter.* The magazine, about the same size as *Horizon,* but three times as thick, appeared quarterly (usually over 200 pages a time). Most issues contained a blend of French, English and American writings. Thus, a typical issue had Paul Valéry writing on Stendahl, a poem by André Spire, an essay by Pierre Minet, an article by Leon Lemmonier, some reprinted poems of Arthur Rimbaud, the scenario of a short play by Roger Vitrac, a William Gerhardi short story, poetry by Allen Tate and Robert Penn Warren, Richard Aldington writing on the War Novel ("the difficulty is that everyone remembers the exceptional, whereas what is important in literature is the ordinary, made vivid and interesting"), and contributions from Julian Green, May Cole, A. S. J. Tessimond and Norah Hoult. Kay Boyle was another English writer who appeared regularly in *This Quarter,* of which, by the way, Samuel Putnam was associate editor. Through *This Quarter* Richard Aldington made his offer of an annual prize of 2,500 francs to be awarded by the editorial committee of the paper to the ablest young American poet whose work appeared during the year. Later Edward Titus reciprocated by offering 2,500 francs for award

to the ablest young English poet of the year (a qualification in both cases being that some of the poet's work should have appeared in *This Quarter*). *This Quarter* was one of the earliest supporters of "America's looming literary idol," Ernest Hemingway. It also specialized in recollective anecdotes of the heydays of French literature.

The *Exile* was more individualistic than *This Quarter:* founded and edited by Ezra Pound, it enabled that extreme individualist to develop the ideas and promises which he had expounded through the *Little Review*. The *Exile* had an attractive appearance, was pocket-size, and—as might have been expected—it had some unconventional contents. For instance, the editorial note in the first issue announced: "Most of the editorial matter for this issue is held over because of the length of Mr. Rodker's contribution. Naturally, having selected a format seemingly large enough to contain all that highly specialised sort of writing we intend to print, the first discovered manuscript is out of proportion to the format." Mr. Rodker's contribution, "Adolphe, 1920" (no relation to Adolf of a later period), totalled some 60 pages and even then had to be continued in the next issue. Also in this first issue was a poem "Natal Verses for the Birth of a New Review," by Richard Aldington, which, I think, is worth reproducing:

"Let us resurrect the useful word Dickkopfig,
Let us apply it to those it fits,
Above all let us apply it to ourselves.
But in any case let us apply it to Don Ezra,
Who, having secured at the prime of life
A more than Horatian otium,
And having obtained more applause by his silence
Than ever he obtained by his not always negligible speech,
Now in the eighth lustre of his career

When the libidinous itch for publicity
Should long ago have subsided into placid indifference
Madly casts away the only true felicity
For the ignominious servitude
And distracting toil
Of Editorship.
Light fall the blows upon his head—
For he will need all its thickness—
And let us regret the fall of this man
For once he had the courage
To be silent for several years."

Pound himself wrote an interesting editorial programme in the first issue, commenting "The artist, the maker, is always too far ahead of any revolution or reaction or counter-revolution or counter-reaction for his vote to have any immediate result; and no party program ever contains enough of his program to give him the least satisfaction. The party that follows him wins and the speed with which they set about it is the measure of their practical capacity in intelligence. Blessed are they who pick the right artists and makers." Apart from that, Pound plaintively stated his desire to open a small "open forum" in which the virtues and faults, both of Fascist and Communist revolutions and their effects on art, could be discussed without excessive animus. Incidentally, among the other contributions was a single-line poem, by one E. W. Hemingway. It read: "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want him for long." Mr. Pound explained: "Mr. Hemingway's poem refers to events in what remains of the French world of letters." (Note the change of attitude compared with remarks in the *Little Reviews* of 1918.)

Transition, of course, proved to be far the most important of these English-speaking reviews which originated from

France (during its career it has also been printed in Holland and America) and it is—or rather, unfortunately, was—far and away the most original little review to appear this century. *Transition* was founded in 1927, as a more or less eclectic organ, with the basic aim of "opposing to the prevailing photographic naturalism a more imaginative concept of prose and poetry . . . and encouraging a new style by postulating the metamorphosis of reality." As a documentary organ, it began by bringing to the attention of Anglo-American readers translated stories and poems from various camps, including expressionism, post-expressionism, dadaism, surrealism. From its first issue it published seriatim eighteen fragments from James Joyce's "Work in Progress." Moreover, a number of *Transition* writers also served as interpreters of this new and difficult work (i.e. the symposium under the title "Our Exagmination round his Factification for Incamination of Work in Progress"). In addition to presenting works by the most unorthodox English, French and American writers—works which, though valuable, would not have been published by the popular magazines—*Transition* also supported a definite policy in literature and art. It attempted to create what its editor, Eugène Jolas, termed "a new narrative in a magic realism (paramyth) and a new form of dream-poetry (hypnologue)." After the first year of research, according to Jolas, it became an independent workshop for the development of a new style and a new language through a continuous effort to expand the frontiers of expression. It was certainly the first modern little review published in Europe or America to recognize the "malady of language." It sought the de-banalization of creative language by encouraging the phantasmatic metaphor and the exploration of neologistic possibilities. It organized and brought into focus, for the first

time, the efforts being made in that direction by writers in English, French and German, such as James Joyce, Leon-Paul Fargue and Jolas himself (and certain left-wing representatives of German expressionism). As a result, *Transition* ultimately published a manifesto, "Revolution of the Word," which pleaded for the writer's right to subjugate syntax and vocabulary to his individual ends. Later *Transition* associated the mutation of language with the new discoveries related to the expansion of consciousness (night-mind). It was the first to relate this problem to the reconstruction of the myth. It asked for a linguistic reformation "not out of æsthetic caprice, but because such a reformation was actually taking place in real life, especially in America." *Transition* sought "a welding together of all the linguistic elements that were making the new English language, of all the contributions to Anglo-American speech to be found in the inter-racial crucible which the North-America continent represents." *Transition* always adhered, as a policy, to the belief in the primacy of the creative spirit. (When a split occurred in the ranks of writers everywhere simultaneously with the world-depression in 1930 it took its stand on the side of a metaphysical, as opposed to a materialist-economic, interpretation of life, and later announced: "Poetry is vertical.") *Transition* appeared quarterly, usually totalled 400 pages. The bulk of its contents was in English, but some appeared in French, German, Spanish, Italian and Dutch.

The influence of these English-printed, French-published little reviews was quickly felt in England, directly and indirectly (although the influence of *Transition* belonged more to the late twenties and early thirties). Ezra Pound's influence was particularly strong, and was noticeable in the *Townsman,* a quarterly review which still appears from its wilderness head-

quarters in North Cornwall. *Townsman* was launched by Ronald Duncan, a young English poet and playwright who had travelled in America and on the Continent, becoming a close friend of Ezra Pound's. *Townsman* appeared because Duncan felt the need for some publication in this country, with a primarily private circulation, which would say exactly what it thought about modern art and literature.' Although the paper's sale was small, it had a very high standard of contributions, particularly in the first few years—with names such as Pound, Lewis and Eliot, and some good poetry from the editor. Thanks to Pound's active publicity help (in addition to his contributions to almost every issue) the magazine built up a good reputation in America, as well as here. In peacetime most of its contents were given to somewhat destructive criticism of every form of art and literature which did not fit in with the Pound-Wyndham Lewis-Duncan conception. A "return to the land" note has been more prominent in recent years, also a strong pacifist tendency, and literary contributors have been ousted by such men as Sir Albert Howard, the eminent agriculturist, and the Duke of Bedford.

Through the 1920's, the old-established reviews such as *The London Mercury, Chambers, Blackwood's, Spectator,* etc., continued to develop. One of their ilk, the *Athenæum,* after surviving the war, had at last succumbed (just failing to celebrate its centenary) in 1921, when it became amalgamated with the *Nation*—thus forming what is now the flourishing *New Statesman and Nation*. At the time of the amalgamation the *London Mercury* bemoaned the fact that it left the *Times Literary Supplement* as the only English non-popular weekly devoted exclusively to literature and scholarship. However, both the *Nation* and the *Spectator* published a considerable amount of first-class literary reviewing and criticism, apart from their

political sections. It was only about a year after the *Athenæum* amalgamation, too, that a third political-literary weekly entered the field, this being the ambitious *Time and Tide,* offspring of the late Lady Rhondha. *Time and Tide,* the *New Statesman* and the *Spectator* have always worked within a somewhat similar framework—i.e. political commentary, gossip notes, special articles, readers' letters, book and art reviews—but at its inception *Time and Tide* struck an unusual note, with its strong feminine background. Founded by a woman, published by a board of women, it was perhaps the first high quality literary representation in the big movements towards woman's emancipation. Certainly it found a ready place, and with such contributors as Rebecca West, Stella Benson, Cicely Hamilton, Winifred Holtby and Vera Brittain, it had a good bookstall appeal. (Winifred Holtby was closely associated with *Time and Tide,* and was a director for many years.) Apart from the indirect covering of literary matters by the weeklies, the loss of the *Athenæum* was made up, to some extent, by the ever-expanding *London Mercury,* which reached its peaks during the post-war years, under J. C. Squire's long editorship. Another compensation was the appearance of *Life and Letters,* edited by Desmond MacCarthy. It was published monthly, containing mostly articles and reviews. Typical contents were (from November, 1928): Bertrand Russell writing an "Catholic and Protestant Sceptics," a long "Russian Story" by David Garnett, a Paris letter from André Maurois, an essay by the late Robert Byron, and ten pages of categorized book "selections," without comment. Since then *Life and Letters* has always held a firm place in English literature, and it is encouraging to note that it has so far successfully ridden the stormy waves of the present war, under the able editorship of Robert Herring. Another old-established, purely

literary review of the early post-war period—the quarterly *Scrutiny*—is also neither dead nor lying down. Most of the contents of *Scrutiny* are analytical articles and lengthy studies of literary trends, from a highly technical point of view. The paper has been fostered largely by F. R. Leavis, who is recognized as one of the leading literary critics of these times. It is now edited by Leavis, together with L. C. Knights, D. W. Harding and W. H. Meller.

The 1920's were also notable for the increase in popularity of a number of little reviews concerned with something more than literature. Among these were *Twentieth Century, Purpose,* Alec Vidler's *Theology,* Chesterton's *Weekly Review,* and *Christendom. Purpose* was one of the most unusual of all these types of reviews, for it brought with it a strong concern for the individual, in the face of a disintegrating civilization, and it approached the problem from the point of view of such new and advancing cults as Nature Cure, Community-living, bio-chemistry, etc. At the same time it had a strong book review section, and occasionally printed some good poetry. It was edited by W. T. Symons, author of the "Coming of Community," and A. Desmond Hawkins, more recently, was literary editor. Incidentally, the following *Purpose* comment on little reviews is of suitable interest:

> "The movement of the spirit taking place in the world of thought is so much concerned with fertility that it seems associated with the returning sense of the land. An intense and sincere criticism of all frustration moves parallel with the more 'material' awakening of which we speak. The utterance of faith in human possibility follows. It infects the literature of the day, sweeping with religious fervour over the cynicisms of the last decade. Its characteristic

vehicle is the small non-commercial journal, sacrificially produced in all the great centres of civilisation and consciously devoted to the liberation of free intelligence. The crushing weight of a declining civilisation is fully recognised, but the many journals of which we speak are not devoted to lamentation: they would conserve what is valuable and bring forth the new flowers of human genius wherever they may be found. They contain many evidences of injury suffered by the sensitive; the violent nausea they exhibit is part of the truth of this time; many lies have to be uncovered and repudiated. . . ."

Although these remarks were actually published in *Purpose* during the 1930 period, they apply, in general, to-day.

Finally we come to a little review which, of those published in the twenties, I have purposely left to last, as it was probably the most important of all English-published magazines of that decade. This was *Criterion,* founded and edited by T. S. Eliot, during the peak period of his career. Under his guiding hand, *Criterion* was able to introduce a new note into our literary press, a constructively critical note which was very much needed to arrest us out of an apathy of cynicism and thumb-twiddling. Founded in 1923, *Criterion* set out simply and accurately to present as complete a record as possible of the intellectual life of Europe. Less outspoken perhaps than the *Little Review,* but more so than the *London Mercury,* it endeavoured consistently to bring about a new awareness, among English writers, of all that was going on in other countries, while at the same time always encouraging home talent. *Criterion* was the first magazine in England to print Marcel Proust, Paul Valéry, Jacques Maritain, Charles Maurras, Max Scheler, Hugo von Hofmannstal, Jean Cocteau and many other foreign writers. Among its frequent con-

tributors were Chesterton, Yeats, Eliot, Virginia Woolf, Clive Bell, Huxley, Pound, Wyndham Lewis, E. M. Forster, Joyce, May Sinclair, Charles Whibley and George Saintsbury. It quickly became a vehicle for such contributors as I have listed —the organ of a definite intellectual and artistic movement which flourished during the 1920's. The *Criterion* attitude was always critical—perhaps, sometimes, too critical, or irritatingly superior—but at least its pages were never dull, nor without meaning or purpose. Through the magazine Eliot endeavoured to re-stimulate the appreciation, in this country, of art for art's sake; and although the magazine's appeal may have declined somewhat in the face of later more urgent, more political attitudes to art, there was always a place of honour for it in any literary circle. Its decease, owing to the war, was a real blow.

CHAPTER IV

Our little reviews of the 1930's were as different from those of the 1920's as were the conditions and outlooks of the writers of the two periods. Between 1929 and 1930 there occurred the great economic crisis, affecting not merely the working classes but the middle classes and the intellectuals. At this same time there was growing up a group of new young writers, led by the poets W. H. Auden, Cecil Day Lewis and Stephen Spender, who were intensely conscious of the great social, political and moral changes going on around them. They became, in the words of one of their number, John Lehmann, "increasingly convinced that it was part of

their business to communicate their vision of this process not merely to the so-called highbrow intellectual public to which their predecessors had addressed themselves, but to the widest possible circle of ordinary people engaged in the daily struggle for existence." Poetry was the selected medium for these writers, at first, and it was not long before they sought a literary mouthpiece for the expression of their views. The publication, in 1932, of an annual under the title "New Signatures," grouping together some of the best poetry of the group, was followed a year later by another annual, "New Country," which contained not only poetry, but essays and short stories, with a definite left-wing tone. These two publications, both edited by Michael Roberts—presenting poetry which "represents a clear reaction against esoteric poetry in which it is necessary for the reader to catch each recondite allusion"—set the background to the appearance, in 1933, of one of the most significant little reviews of the past decade, *New Verse*. *New Verse* printed poetry and criticism, and its avowed purpose was to declare an end to poetic isolation. Thus, one of the early issues stated: "There have been experimental writers to whom we owe much, but to whose real deficiencies and real eccentricities we owe nothing. The only justified retreat is the loneliness from which everything and everybody is more visible, the loneliness in the centre and not on the edge. Unless the poet can be there at least sometimes he has no right to exist and no claim to be tolerated, and need expect no good man to listen to him. . . . What we need now is not the fanatic but the critical moralist." Under this banner, *New Verse* fostered the development of a wide and important range of poets, including, in addition to Auden, Day Lewis and Spender, such new writers as Christopher Isherwood, Kenneth Allott, Louis Macneice,

Charles Madge, Julian Bell, William Empson, William Plomer, Geoffrey Grigson. *New Verse* was founded and edited by Grigson, with Kenneth Allott as assistant editor. Grigson, Allott and Michael Roberts supplied the bulk of the critical articles—although John Lehmann, Herbert Read and one or two others contributed special studies from time to time. Grigson, in particular, carried out a useful function in welding the material together into a meaningful whole. He himself wrote in one issue: "I think it is possible to trace in the poems as they come out of *New Verse* this gradual emergence of a criterion, formed by an amalgamation of science (in scraps), Freudian theory (in scraps), Marxist thought (in scraps), the political and economic situation in the world, the practice and precept and perspicacity of Mr. Auden (and Mr. Macneice and Mr. Spender) and the load of reaction and attraction to which the time I belong to has inherited." Grigson's attitude, further expressed ("I judge every poem written now, by poets under 40, by the degree to which it takes notice, for ends not purely individual, of the universe, of objects, and of events"), adequately sums up the attitude of the whole *New Verse* group. This attitude was very capably expressed through the magazine. Most issues totalled 16 pages or so, were printed cheaply but attractively, and sold at 6d. Although the sponsors were accused of forming a clique —and although they did, in a sense, form a clique—there seemed no reason to doubt that they themselves wanted their poetry to reach the widest possible audience (i.e. the low price of 6d.). One of the most interesting numbers of *New Verse* was the Commitments Double Number, the one issue which, in point of fact, did not contain a single poem. It was pointed out that since the æsthetic attitude was now decidedly out of place, poetry was obviously not the only thing to be expected

from poets. So, for that number, several contributors were asked to commit themselves on the relationship, more or less, between those who were poets and those who were not. Auden sent in the amusing parable, "The Sportsmen"; Allott rambled somewhat, suggesting diffidently that morals were important in poetry, that the big drum and grand style were impossible without a conscious moral attitude or a conscious moral perplexity; Macneice maintained that the post was only an extension, or a concentration, of the ordinary man ("the content of poetry comes out of life . . . half the battle is in the selection of material . . . propaganda is not the poet's job"); Prokosch concluded "the poet's character and existence may be vicious, petty, squalid, foolish, savage, even pompous, but it must be forever refreshed and refined, if he is to remain a poet, by a love of life, by a magical sort of irony, by what is mysteriously, tragically and eternally true." *New Verse* ran for seven years, during which time it may be said to have more than served its purpose. Just before it came to an end Grigson edited, and Faber's published, a selection of poems from the first six years' issues, and put out under the same title of *New Verse*.

It was not long before *New Verse* had a companion little review which was eventually to carry on much of its work. One of the original contributors to "New Signatures," John Lehmann, had, in the course of European travels, noticed the increasingly close intellectual interchange between artists and the anti-Fascist political groupings. He was struck with the fact that this was beginning to create a literature with special qualities of its own, and with a powerful realist and human appeal. He also felt that these writers, too little known in this country, had much in common with the "New Signatures" and *New Verse* writers—that all had in common a

strong social consciousness and a desire to speak to, and for, those who were beginning to reach out towards culture as well as those who had been born its heirs. Lehmann therefore envisaged a magazine which could bring together not only middle-class and working-class writers and encourage the latter to come forward—but also writers of both sorts from other countries as well as Britain: a magazine which would also arrange the works of these writers so as to illustrate and complement one another. In 1935 Lehmann began planning such a magazine, originally in collaboration with Christopher Isherwood, later with the help of Stephen Spender, Ralph Fox, Rosamund and Beatrix Lehmann, William Plomer and one or two others. In 1936 the magazine made its appearance, as a bi-monthly book-magazine, under the self-sufficient title *New Writing*. Most of the *New Verse* writers contributed to the early numbers of *New Writing*.

Two of the most important functions of *New Writing* were the publication of work by new writers who had previously had no suitable outlet (i.e. working class writers such as Leslie Halward, Tom Burns, George Garrett, Willy Goldman, G. F. Green, B. L. Coombes) and the presentation of works from abroad. These latter came from such writers as André Chamson, Jean Giono, Louis Guilloux, Anna Seghers, Ignazio Silone, Nikolai Tikhonov and André Malraux. In his book on "New Writing in Europe," John Lehmann claimed: "Nothing reveals more clearly the change that was beginning to come over English literature in the early thirties than a study of the personal background and favourite themes of the majority of *New Writing's* authors, and a comparison of the list with that of magazines which were the centre of the intellectual movement ten years before. As one reviewer has suggested, this is very different from the bizarre clever stuff of the

20's." No. 2 *New Writing* had its contributions from leather-workers, plasterers, dock labourers, seamen, wood-cutters and tailors' apprentices. No. 3 included stories by miners at work in the pits, miners at the time unemployed, volunteers gathering in Paris for the International Brigade, workers fighting in Spain, homesick peasants struggling for a living in Burmese tea plantations, peasants harvesting in France, peasants starving in Estremadura, peasants making a new life for themselves in Georgia, and unemployed workers hunger-marching in England. There was a great deal of justification for Lehmann's pride, although *New Writing* by no means represented all sections of literary development in the 30's. Nevertheless, it is outstanding among the reviews of that period, not only because it gave a voice to an entirely new type of poetry and short story technique—not only because it did, in fact, make writers more conscious of the realities which they were faced with—but also, perhaps above all, because it did have a real and wide influence on the general reading public. It was a possible fault of *New Verse* that its circulation was restricted too much to intellectuals, even though its sponsors wished to avoid just that development. But *New Writing*—possibly because it contained short stories as well as poetry (always restricted in appeal)—had a much wider popularity. For the first few years of its existence it was published in book form, at steadily reduced prices: but early in 1940 Lehmann persuaded Allen Lane to take it on as a Penguin publication. The first number published at 6d. had such a good reception that Penguins have been bringing it out monthly ever since, and it is reputed to have a print order of 100,000. Meanwhile, *New Writing Folios* continue to appear at irregular intervals, also edited by Lehmann.

As might be expected, the *New Verse-New Writing* move-

ment stimulated many other little reviews. Poetry, in particular, had a great boom during the 1930's, and at one time there were at least a dozen good reviews devoted almost exclusively to poetry. University reviews such as *Fords and Bridges* and *Programme* printed poetry by the young writers of the day (slightly younger than the Auden group) which showed how strong was the influence of the new poetry. *Comment* was another small poetry review — not from the Universities, however—one of whose features was its very low selling price of 3d. It was not particularly under the *New Verse* influence, but furrowed its own field, presenting some of the early work of such poets as Julian Symons, Ken Etheridge, Winifred Holmes, A. L. Basham, and H. Mallalieu. A *Comment* annual collection of poetry was also issued. Somewhat more important, perhaps, was *Twentieth Century Verse,* an ambitious monthly poetry review launched in 1937, published by Noble Fortune Press and edited by Julian Symons. While admitting that good verse was now less difficult and touched common life more nearly than a decade or even half a decade ago, *Twentieth Century Verse* did not share the enthusiasm of the *New Verse* group, and thought it "unlikely" that verse would become much simpler, or gain a great many more readers, in the near future. At any rate, it professed itself as not standing on any platform ("we do not believe that poetry is in some odd way a tributary of politics or machinery"), and it had the aim, mainly, of printing the work of young poets who for one reason or another did not get much of a hearing elsewhere. *Twentieth Century Verse* ran for about three years, and was responsible for aiding the introduction of a number of new voices—among them Francis Scarfe, George Woodock, Dorian Cooke, Roy Fuller, Clifford Dyment. The magazine's criticism was sound and sometimes

surprisingly penetrating, and it was perhaps more successful on this side than on its purely poetic side. It did some very useful work with a number of issues devoted to particular aspects of modern poetry (i.e. an All-American issue, with poems and declarations of beliefs from leading American poets —Aiken, Stevens, Williams, Winters, Spencer, Tate and W. R. Moses). Incidentally, *Twentieth Century Verse* had a good American editor in Samuel French Morse, the poet.

CHAPTER V

UNFORTUNATELY space precludes my diverting at any length to discuss developments in France at this time, but this seems an appropriate place to record in brief that the influence of French reviews was as strong, over here, as it was in the 1920's. Paris was still very much the literary centre, right up to 1939—and still a hotbed of surrealist vogues. *This Quarter* and the *Exile* had died, but there was *Transition* continuing stronger than ever, and paying increasing attention—and contributing increasing space—to the now recognized surrealist movement (No. 27, 1938, included Henry Miller on "The Cosmological Eye" and numerous surrealist illustrations and poems—including, rather importantly, "Fragment de l'Universel Poème" from the pen of Dr. Henri M. Barzun, the founder of simultaneisme, whose ideas had a profound influence on Richard Aldington and many French writers). Henry Miller's prestige rose during the middle 30's, and he was the centre of a number of surrealist groups which issued their own little reviews. One of these was the *Booster,* which

was later reissued as *Delta,* "the only magazine in the world which dare to print anything and everything." *Delta* was printed in English. About 1938, when it was particularly popular, it announced one issue, in an advertisement, as follows: "Delta contains fragments from four distinguished and audacious books just published from Paris. Never since the glorious Middle Ages has a review dared to publish such material as we are now offering to the public." *Delta* was not quite so startling as it was sometimes made out to be, but it was read avidly over here—when copies could be obtained—by our younger writers. Among English writers whose work appeared in it were Michael Frankel, Antonia White, and the two poets, Dylan Thomas and Nicholas Moore. Rather more important than *Delta,* from a quality standpoint, were one or two American papers published from Paris. These included *Morada,* a quarterly printed in three languages and published by Donald McKenzie, with James T. Farrell, Gerhardt Pohl, Eduard Roditi, Hans George Brenner and Norman McLeod among contributors (McLeod being a co-editor). Norman McLeod was also American editor of *Front,* published in five sections—American, Russian, European, Oriental and Hispano-American — with such contributors as Kawano, Polonski, Buntin, Herbeit, Mizan, Dos Passos, and Maddow. *New Review* was published from Paris, edited by Samuel Putnam, ex-associate editor of *This Quarter,* in collaboration with Ezra Pound, Maxwell Bodeheim and Richard Thomas. There were, also, of course, a number of French little reviews, which had a considerable following in this country. They included *Mesures, Commune, La Nouvelle Saison, La Nouvelle Revue Francaise*—and a particularly good new review, *Volontés,* which published some of Joyce's latest work, and writings by Miller, Joseph Cstaky, Pièrre Gueguen, Eugène Jolas.

Fréderic Joliot and George Pelorson. On the pure surrealist plane, there were also such important reviews as *Minoutaur* and, late in the decade, *Plastique*—the latter being run by the artists Hans Arp and Sophie Tauber-Arp, in collaboration with Domeal, A. E. Gallatin and Georges L. K. Morris.

It was, indeed, the surrealist movement in France that had one of the strongest influences on our little reviews over here, during the middle thirties—the period in which surrealism at last became officially recognized in this country, although it had, of course, been active for a long time. The first Surrealist Group in England launched its own *Bulletin,* subsequently known as the *London Bulletin,* which printed most of our leading surrealist work. One of the most interesting issues of the *Bulletin* was No. 4, the special one published—on this occasion by Zwemmers—in connection with the International Surrealist Exhibition at New Burlington Galleries. The bulk of this issue was given over to a report of an address by Herbert Read on the political position of surrealism, in which he complained of the pathological individualism "favoured among us now by the fact that the actual forms of our social life (the Churches, the British Constitution) permit endless confusions, equivocations and disguises." To this, Read contributed the "tardy" formation of a Surrealist Group in England. The same issue contained an extract from a lecture on biology and surrealism by Hugh Sykes Davies in which he hazarded a definition of surrealism as "an attitude to life based on the work of Marx and Freud." A part of the issue contained a spirited defence of the Exhibition against the many attacks which were made on it by papers and representatives of more orthodox groups.

An attempt to stimulate surrealist poetry was made about this time by a new review, *Contemporary Poetry and Prose,*

edited by Roger Roughton (still under 19 at that time, although a contributor to *Listener, Criterion* and American papers). The first issue contained poems by Dylan Thomas, Gavin Ewart, E. E. Cummings, William Empson, David Gascoyne, Roughton—also a short story by Thomas, "The Burning Baby." The second issue was much more interesting, containing translations, mostly by Roughton, of surrealist poems by André Breton, Paul Eluard, Benjamin Peret, Tristan Tzara, Georges Hugnet, E. L. T. Meisens and others—with a few English poems from Gascoyne, Humphrey Jennings and Kenneth Allott. For later issues Roughton planned poems from Marianne Moore, Auden, Wallace Stevens and other American poets. *Contemporary Poetry and Prose* was elaborately got up, typographically: it was published from a well-known literary haunt, the Arts Cafe, 1 Parton Street, off Red Lion Square. Apart from its help in awakening interest in surrealist poetry, it did a good bit of work in helping to bring Dylan Thomas more to the public eye. So did *Caravel,* another review with surrealist leanings, which published Thomas, Kay Boyle, Djuna Barnes, etc. Sydney Salt was the editor: he lived out at Majorca and printed and published the magazine there because of the exchange (an American dollar went a long way in Spain in those days). Oswell Blakeston was English editor. He was also, at another time, editor of *Seed,* a small literary magazine with a surprisingly varied list of contributors, including Mary Butts, A. J. S. Tessimond, John Betjeman, Rhys Davies, John Pudney, Emily Holmes, Coleman, Francis Bruguière, Roger Burford and others.

In 1938 there appeared another literary little review which was particularly important, in its way, since (partly unwittingly) it lay the foundations for the creation of what has latterly come to be known as the Apocalyptic group of writers.

This was *Seven,* launched in the summer of 1938 by Gordon Fraser, from Cambridge, and edited by John Godland and Nicholas Moore (Fraser later collected and edited the material for the *White Horseman,* the recent collection of Apocalyptic writings). At this time a group of the new writers—Treece, Hendry, Fraser, Moore—were beginning to find a certain common meeting ground. Their writing was less working-class conscious than that of the *New Writing* group (whether it was such accomplished writing is doubtful). They were more concerned with the problems of the individual—the fact that today they are compelling more attention must be some justification of their attitude. The Apocalyptic writing became more prominent in later issues of *Seven:* it was also partly developed in such smaller reviews as the Cambridge magazine, *Cambridge Front,* edited by George Scursfield, in association with Nicholas Moore and Mark Holloway.

Still another aspect of poetry of the 1930's was presented by *Poetry and the People,* which deviated away from *New Verse* ideas in quite the opposite direction to *Seven. Poetry and the People* set out to propagate the idea expressed in its title—that poetry must relate to, and be understood by (and preferably written by) the people. If at present it could not be understood, then the fault was as much with the poets as with the people, and simpler writing was called for. Unfortunately, *Poetry and the People* was over-weighted with left-wing politics; indeed, it admitted frankly that it was concerned with poetry as one more weapon in the class struggle, as much as for any other reason. Apart from some of Randall Swingler's work, *Poetry and the People* did not turn out any outstanding poetry, but was valuable as a reflection of the strengthening interest in poetry among the working classes. Soon after the war started the paper was renamed *Our Time,* and it now

gives nearly all space to articles and stories, while preserving the working-class outlook. As a literary paper it is limited by the narrowness of its political outlook, but within its own limitations it is efficient and successful.

CHAPTER VI

One of the most interesting literary trends of the 1930's was the development of little reviews representing strong nationalist culture movements—the *Voice of Scotland, Wales, Welsh Review,* etc. *Voice of Scotland* was sponsored and edited by the ardent Scottish Nationalist, Hugh MacDiarmid—who, under the name C. W. Grieve, had edited *Scottish Nation,* and been actively connected with many other Scottish literary and political publications. As one of the major Scottish poets of to-day, MacDiarmid commands a considerable reputation, particularly, of course, in his own country, and during its short career *Voice of Scotland* was recognized as an event of potential importance in stimulating a revival in Scottish literature (unfortunately it has been stopped by the war). *Voice of Scotland* described itself as "the organ of Scottish Workers' Republicanism, anti-English and pro-Gaelic (Scottish, Welsh, Cornish and Irish), devoted to the rigorous application of dialectical materialist analysis to the issues generally burked by the Communist Party of Great Britain and especially to British international problems and anti-Imperialism generally, and to the implementation of Marxism by what Marx and his successors have failed to supply, viz., an æsthetic." The stress on "Gaelic" outlook in its widest sense was interesting—a special

Gaelic number was once published with contributions from Nationalists of Wales, Scotland and Ireland (even a Cornish representative was found!). Ordinary issues of *Voice of Scotland* also contained contributions from a few Welsh and Irish writers. In the same way, *Wales* printed material from MacDiarmid and J. F. Hendry, among its Welsh contents. During its eleven or twelve quarterly issues, before closing down in 1940, *Wales* was edited by a number of writers in turn, including Nigel Heseltine and, more recently, Keidrych Rhys. The reason for the considerable success achieved by *Wales* was probably the interest aroused in the last few years by the appearance of a very strong Welsh influence in our literature. Young writers, benefiting by the pioneer work of such as Caradoc Evans and Rhys Davies, have broken much new ground, and are to-day among our best writers — i.e. Dylan Thomas, Glyn Jones, Gwyn Jones, Vernon Watkins, George Ewart Evans, Alun Lewis, Kate Roberts, John Prichard, Geraint Goodwin, Keidrych Rhys, Richard Llewellyn. Nearly all these were available to *Wales,* and to Gwyn Jones's *Welsh Review,* with the result that issues of these two magazines for the past three or four years contain a very high standard of work. *Welsh Review,* also a quarterly, was rather older-established than *Wales,* but seemed equally open to progressive writing. It was a larger magazine than *Wales* and was consequently able to print more stories and articles: *Wales,* on the other hand, concentrated on poetry and short pieces. Both overlapped, and now both have ceased publication—it seems a pity a merger into one magazine could not have been effected, for Wales surely needs a voice now—when she has more first-rate writers than for many a year—more than ever.

As some compensation for the loss of the Welsh and Irish reviews, there has been the appearance of the *Bell,* edited by

Sean O'Faolain from Dublin. There have been a number of reviews published in Ireland, from time to time—and *Dublin Review, Dublin Magazine* (and such strongly Catholic reviews as *Irish Rosary* and *Irish Monthly*) are still in existence—but there are hopeful signs that the *Bell,* which is closely modelled, it would seem, on *Horizon,* will find a much-needed place in Irish literature of to-day. To our eyes, it seems somewhat unreal with its studious avoidance of war influences—and it has the usual Irish magazine's provincialism—but it has a first-class writer and artist as editor and may do a lot to weld together the somewhat disintegrated literary groups of present day Eire.

Finally, there were many very individual little reviews, unconnected with any of the movements I have mentioned, which appeared during the 1930's, and which would receive longer mention if they were not so difficult to trace. Two of the best known were the *New English Weekly* and the *Left Review.* The *Left Review* was primarily a critical vehicle, and was edited by Edgell Rickword, who had been a co-editor of *Calendar.* It was advanced for its time, but inclined to be dogmatic and prejudiced, although it probably influenced some of the *New Verse* writers. *New English Weekly* was the effort of that remarkable man, A. R. Orage, who had previously edited *The New Age.* Orage had great intellectual vision and infused into his new magazine some of the qualities that were sadly lacking from the more materialistic ordinary run of literary paper. T. S. Eliot was also actively connected with *New English Weekly,* which has continued to this day, when it is edited by Philip Mairet. Mention should also be made of the opposite to the *Left Review,* Count Potocki's *Right Review,* which seems now to have stopped. As a little review this was something of a freak, concentrating entirely on

propagating the idea of a return to monarchy in Poland (it was represented as the "official organ of the Royal House of Poland"), but at least it provided amusing reading. The *Right Review,* among lengthy articles about the proposed new Polish constitution, the life of Count Potocki, the merits of Codreanu, the Rumanian Fascist, etc., found room occasionally for brief and scornful literary criticisms—it greeted *Horizon* as an expression of the "unholy blue funk of the highbrow cliques."

CHAPTER VII

SEPTEMBER, 1939, found literature in this country very much in the melting-pot. The past few years had seen a significant exodus of many of our best writers and artists, mostly in the U.S.A. This trend was keenly reflected in the world of little reviews, for, whereas, here, they were diminishing in number and quality, America was supporting new review after new review, and her older reviews were flourishing as never before. The so-called "renaissance" of American literature, regarded as starting during the last war, had at any rate become more solid by the 30's. From the days of *Hound and Horn* (possibly the most famous of American post-war reviews, apart from *Little Review*) there had been a maturing of outlook among American writers, and during the years leading up to the war this was reflected in the appearance of a number of intellectual reviews of a very high quality—including *Partisan Review,* the *Examiner, New Directions, New Voices,* and *Voices*—and in a general improvement among the established reviews such as *Southern Review, American Mercury, Kenyon*

Review, Southern Literary Messenger, and *Virginia Quarterly.* Poetry, too, shared the revival, through such reviews as the 20-years-old *Poetry, Diogenes, Fantasy, Compass, Accent, Poetry World, Furioso,* surrealist flavoured, and *View*—the last being one of the most interesting for its policy of presenting poets as commentators "because poetry itself is not enough, but because now more than ever contemporary action should be viewed through the eyes of the poets." One of the most recent new American little reviews, *Decision,* perhaps best illustrates the fact that most of the leading thinkers in literature and philosophy have moved Westwards. The magazine had an editorial board of advisers, including W. H. Auden, Thomas Mann, Somerset Maugham, Julian Green and Bruno Frank, and its contributors include André Gide, Heinrich Mann, Benjamin Britten, Pierre van Paassen, Frederic Prokosch and Frank Kingdon. Similarly impressive lists of contributors belong to most of the other American reviews I have mentioned. Since many of these writers were previously in this country, and able to contribute regularly to our own literary papers, it is obvious that their departure weakened, to some extent any way, the quality of little reviews over here. This position was beginning to make itself felt even before war started—not so much in the new individualistic magazines I have mentioned, perhaps, as among such established papers as *Criterion.*

With the coming of war—the departure of further contingents of writers to America, the possibility of all sorts of restrictions on culture—it seemed probable that the field of reviews would be even more limited. Nevertheless, it came as a shock when, in quick succession, *Criterion, Cornhill, New Stories* and *Purpose* all ceased publication—while at the same time the *London Mercury* was incorporated into *Life and Letters.* The panic cry that there was no room for culture

in wartime was heard again; there were temporary visions of a literary world devoid of all except perhaps the daily paper book criticisms. It was just at this period, when perhaps most needed, that *Horizon* was launched. It could not hope to fill the gap entirely, but by reason of its qualifications, and its sternly avowed purpose of avoiding all artificiality, it offered a new anchorage to a large group of intellectuals who found themselves, while considerably in sympathy with the *New Writing* movement, a little concerned lest its revelling in the activities of bricklayers and coal-miners should curtail unnecessarily the appreciation of culture in its purely æsthetic sense. There is no need to elaborate on the virtues and faults of *Horizon*. It has certainly won much admiration by its refusal to print bad poetry or bad stories (to the extent of not printing any poems or stories at all in many issues). Although it has given a large part of its space to excessively "literary" material, usually by experts in their field, it has not neglected the new voices—but perhaps it occasionally suffers from a little deafness. Moreover, *Horizon* has not been afraid, nor incapable, of realizing that the scope of modern literature is constantly changing—hence the appearance of such original articles as George Orwell's review of the boys' weeklies and the same writer's article on "The Art of Donald MacGill," a study of comic postcard "literature." Of *Horizon's* faults, perhaps the chief is a certain inability, so far, to find a common ground for linking up present day literature with present day politics: this division, a sense of isolating one from the other, is still occasionally noticeable in an average issue.

Three other new little reviews appeared about the same time as *Horizon*, although possibly not with quite the same importance: *Kingdom Come, Now* and *Poetry* (*London*). Of these *Poetry*, for a short time, ceased publication, but has now

resumed. In its early issues *Poetry* showed signs of being the most promising poetry review we have had since *New Verse*—although its outlook is quite different. Indeed, *Poetry* inclines more to the outlook of *Seven* and, in many senses, has taken over from the latter the task of presenting the work of the Apocalyptic writers. Nearly every issue contains poetry by such poets as Dylan Thomas, Henry Treece, J. F. Hendry, G. S. Fraser, Tom Scott, Nicholas Moore, etc. *Poetry* is by no means an official mouthpiece for the Apocalyptic group alone, however, and it has also presented poetry by many young writers who are not identified with any group—i.e. Francis Scarfe, Vernon Watkins, D. S. Savage, Tambimuttu. *Poetry* offers "water in the desert" for a large group of young poets barred by political outlook from *New Writing* and, perhaps, by lack of space, from *Horizon*. It is edited by Tambimuttu, assisted by Anthony Dickins, and Frances Steloff is editor in America, where there is a good demand—showing that the Americans, for all their glut of British literary leaders, are still intensely curious to know about poetic developments over here.

Kingdom Come and *Now* were launched as wartime literary magazines—the first being associated with Oxford, the second with Cambridge. *Kingdom Come,* which incorporated the Oxford University magazines, *Bolero* and *Light and Dark,* was founded by John Waller, assisted by Miles Vaughan Williams and (I understand) Dr. Marie Stopes. During its first two years it always had a strong University flavour, but also published many well-known contributors from outside (Ruth Pitter, L. A. G. Strong, H. E. Bates, Kay Boyle, Cecil Day Lewis, John Gielgud, Middleton Murry, Naomi Mitchison, Margaret Rawlings, etc.). John Waller was suddenly sent abroad on Army Service, and the last issue of the

magazine to appear from Oxford was a very makeshift affair. After this issue, *Kingdom Come* was taken over (autumn, 1941) by a new group, headed by Stefan Schimanski, Alan Rook and Henry Treece, with Robert Melville as art editor and Elizabeth Waller as Oxford editor. In its new format, *Kingdom Come* is more presentable, rather solid, but a little vague as to its aims. Herbert Read, Kingsley Martin, C. V. Wedgwood were among contributors to recent issues. Editorial professed the desire "to add another voice to the few voices that already exist to call men back to sanity, to reunite thought and action, spirit and matter." With sufficient financial backing, there is certainly no reason why *Kingdom Come* should not fill one of the gaps among little reviews.

Now made its appearance early in 1940 and is significant as one of the main representations of the anti-war section of British writers. "For the artist there seems only one choice," announced *Now* No. 1. "Art is anti-thetical to evil and violence, and evil and violence have their supreme avatar in war, when the common virtues are suspended and truth hibernates for the duration. . . . It is no particular violence, e.g. national violence, that we must oppose, but all violence, no matter what the cause that uses it." *Now* has not, of course, excluded non-pacifists from its contributors, but naturally the bulk of its contents of poems-stories-articles have been supplied by writers not in agreement with the war—many of them quite established writers, such as Middleton Murry, Wilfred Wellock, D. S. Savage, Nicholas Moore, Alexander Comfort, Hugh Ross Williamson, the Duke of Bedford, F. A. Ridley. George Woodock, editor of *Now,* is a poet, besides being an active writer in the pacifist and anarchist movements. *Now* has suffered from an irritating inclination to waste space, issue after issue, on lengthy and self-conscious discussions as to the function

of *Now:* there has been very little cohesion apparent in the quarterly collection of stories, poems and articles (although the articles have seldom being dull): but the magazine has fulfilled an important task in providing an outlet for the pacifist view point, among intellectuals. Latterly *Now* has taken on a stronger anarchist flavour, and it is now reported to have become associated with Freedom Press, the official anarchist party publishers.

Horizon, Poetry, Kingdom Come, Now and Wrey Gardiner's vastly improved *Poetry Quarterly,* a mouthpiece of the youngest and newest poets, have been the better known of the English little reviews to be developed in this country since the war started, and they—together with *Life and Letters, Horizon* and the political-literary weeklies, *New Statesman,* etc.—have presented most of the worthwhile work by our established progressive writers. Nevertheless, there are still in existence a surprisingly large number of little reviews, having very small circulations and being written, for the most part, by young writers practically unknown in the literary world. Remembering that there is an urgent need for new blood, for new voices to lead us out of to-day's quagmire, one feels they should not be ignored, even though all of them have faults of one sort or another. Space forbids a detailed introduction, so I will categorize them in brief.

Opus strikes an unusual note (possibly escapist, possibly extremely realistic) by ignoring political theorizing and insisting on the need for self-awareness, self-training, the reformation of the individual as a pre-essential to any Utopia. Contents include studies of individualist thinkers such as Lawrence, Jeffries, and articles on self-training, new education and natural health movements—also stories and poems. *Wind and the Rain* is a curious mixture, a theological-literary quarterly

founded by Michael Allmand, edited by Neville Braybrooke and Terence Marks. Extremely well printed—and published in aid of the Red Cross — it has had contributions by Christopher Hollis, David Pilgrim, J. B. Morton, Walter de la Mare, G. Wilson Knight. *New Vision* (which was actually started before the war) is an avowedly pacifist review, less cynical and political than *Now*, interesting itself more in various progressive movements, such as progressive schools, and publishing mostly articles. The paper is edited by Geoffrey Pittock-Buss, organizer of the Youth Service League, which does good work in arranging amateur theatrical performances, poetry readings, music recitals, etc. *Free Expression* is an avowedly anti-Government review, edited by S. D. Frances, George Smith, A. R. Maddocks, C. H. Watkins, plus the advice of a Government Board to which readers can claim access as members by contributing 1s. a week. Aim of *Free Expression*, "to promote the widest possible freedom of thought by acting as a forum for all points of view," is necessarily somewhat negative, but the paper shows spirit, and has printed some lively interviews with Cyril Joad, Walter Greenwood and other well-known Left-Wing personalities. *Seven* (no relation to the pre-war *Seven*) was launched about eighteen months ago on the old angle of letting readers write the paper. Obviously inspired by *New Writing*, it nevertheless brings out some interesting work by the man-in-the-street (teachers, wardens, soldiers, miners, librarians, etc.) and scored a winner with a twelve-page section of children's writings and drawings. *Phœnix* started in Scotland, where it was edited by Cynthia Crawshaw, Norman Hampson, Norman Swallow and Basil Widger, who believe "behind the clumsy style, the gaudy and injudicious emphasis, the morbid self-dissection (of writers in little reviews) there is a fresh mind awakening to self-consciousness." (*Phœnix* is now published from Manchester.)

Indian Writing is a quarterly which publishes stories and poems by young Indian writers, such as Mulk Raj. Anano.

Among other reviews are, or have been, *Oasis,* a lively anthology got out by a group of Bomb Disposal men, edited by Private John Bate, with Keith Vaughan (a *New Writing* contributor), Victor Turner, Denis Henry among contributors; *Manuscript,* also sponsored by members of a non-combatant Army unit, believing in "love, tolerance and the spread of an international mind as the only hope for individuals and nations"; and *Here and Now,* an annual collection of poems and stories by a group of young writers who hold poetry readings at each other's homes—there being no underlying purpose other than sheer intellectual entertainment. There has also recently appeared *Arson*—a little review which might have importance in the literary world, since it represents a belated revival of interest, once again, in surrealism. *Arson* is edited by Toni del Renzio, and has Renzio, Robert Melville, Eileen Agar and other well-known English surrealists among contributors (also an interview in New York with André Breton). At the time of writing it is impossible to give an opinion of *Arson* (except that it reveals the usual pretentiousness of all surrealist papers), but it can, and should, perform a useful service. Here, mention should also be made of two other publications which, although hardly little reviews, perform a similar function of encouraging young writers. Both have a commendable singleness of aim—to further interest in, and quality of, the short story. These publications are *English Story* and *Modern Reading,* both of which tend to represent middle-class writings as compared with *New Writing's* working-class theme. Woodrow and Susan Wyatt are the sponsors of *English Story,* which was originally intended to be a bi-monthly periodical, but is in fact—owing to paper difficulties —a six-monthly book-magazine. Edward O'Brien helped to

get it started, and the work of selection is assisted by an advisory committee, including H. E. Bates, John Davenport, Leslie Halward, L. A. Pavey and Geoffrey West. Nothing startling has appeared in *English Story's* few issues to date, but that is not so much the fault of the editors as of the writers, and the potential value of the magazine is obvious. *Modern Reading,* too, has produced nothing extraordinary, but it has printed a number of promising new writers (Clark Neill, Sidney Keyes, Pamela King) as well as many well-known writers (such as Pritchett, Saroyan, Grahame Greene, Storm Jameson, Neil Bell). Its editor, Reginald Moore, is himself one of the best known of the fairly new young writers.

The final little review development to be noted—in this country, during the war—is the appearance of a number of magazines sponsored by groups of refugee writers belonging to one or other of the Continental countries, now living over here. In a sense, this development may be regarded as some form of compensation for our own loss of many writers to the U.S.A. London is now quite a strong centre of Continental intellectual outlook, although it has to be remembered that many of the best brains are in New York. Still, there is a great deal to be proud of in such new publications as *La France Libre,* edited by André Labarthe, and the *Belgian Message,* edited by Paul Weyemberg, the Belgian lawyer who prosecuted Degrelle, leader of the Rexists. Both these and other reviews, such as *Mysel Polska* (Polish), *Obser* (Czech), *Free Austria* and *Freie Deutsche Kultur* (monthly organ of the Free German League of Culture), are printed in the national language.

AUTHOR'S NOTE.—Little reviews come and go like the wind, are sometimes impossible to trace. These short notes do not pretend to be comprehensive, but are offered mainly for their interest value as being the result of research into an apparently unexplored field—with the hope that later they may be expanded into something more solid.

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